

BECKWITH *News*

A Newsletter of Beckwith Residential Support Services

Fall 2011

Nugent Hall | University Housing
College of Applied Health Sciences



ILLINOIS

New Beginnings

By Patricia B. Malik, Ph.D., Director



One of the best aspects of being part of a university community, and the Director of Beckwith Residential Support Services (BRSS) is that we have an opportunity to have a new beginning every August! Every new beginning with our program is based on what has happened the previous academic year and its ending. The cycle is one that I have come to appreciate and enjoy. This year has been no different.

We said “goodbye” to our old home of Beckwith Hall on John Street in May 2010. The physical move to our new programmatic home of Nugent Hall took place with few issues because of the support we received from our new University Housing partners. In all honesty, the physical move was the easiest part of this new beginning as it has been an exciting year for those involved with BRSS and University Housing. Despite adjusting to new policies, procedures, and RESIDENTS, those involved in the Beckwith community (residents and staff alike) grew personally and professionally in many ways. It is a great pleasure to share with you these highlights from our “beginning” year at Nugent Hall.

Four new residents moved into the first floor of Nugent Hall in August 2010. The move in day was filled with the usual boxes, posters, and anxiety. In addition, we had a reporter from the *Chicago Tribune* following Kelsey Rozema and Ben Fultz and their families. This was a unique opportunity to capture what the transition from home to college is like as a freshman and a transfer student with severe disabilities AND to record it historically for future generations. The article can be found at: www.chicagotribune.com/news/education/ct-met-u-of-i-disability-dorm-20100818,0,796860.story. Kelsey and her mother’s perspective of this past year can be found in this newsletter.

Another first year resident, Victoria Raymond, received BRSS for the fall semester. She was eager to move into Newman Hall – a goal of hers before she arrived on campus. So, Vicky had two new beginnings this year because as soon as she settled into her Nugent home, it was time to pack up her belongings in December to become a Newman Hall resident. Her article “Rules for The Game of College” provides insight on how to approach new beginnings of life in college.

Opportunities for educating our university community as well as the nation were numerous. Beckwith/Nugent Hall staff specifically, Alicia Santeralli, Brian K. Willis, Jr. and Gina Dentzman, organized an outstanding Disability Awareness Program that was attended by over 200 people. It brought in Illinois (and Beckwith) alumnus, Steve Hopkins, as the guest speaker, and opened up opportunities for dialogue throughout this community. Also, when there is a brand new building with state of the art accessibility technology, such as a SureHands track system, proximity readers and a wireless paging system – many people want to come and check it out. So there were many tours highlighting the facility and explaining the uniqueness of BRSS. The combination of Nugent Hall and BRSS make this partnership between University Student Affairs and the College of Applied Health Sciences one of a kind in the United States and beyond. This was reported through an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* which can be read at: <http://chronicle.com/article/Disabled-Students-Declare/125777/?sid=at&>.

The university community was able to learn about a student’s perspective when John Burton was part of the opening celebrations of Nugent Hall, BRSS and the Student Dining and Residential Programs (SDRP) buildings in the fall. John was so outstanding that he was invited to address the University Board of Trustees at their March 2011 meeting. I am sure you will enjoy reading John’s thoughts.

Each year we evaluate the needs of our Beckwith supported residents to see how best they can be met. This year we decided that parents of first year residents could benefit from more information and support. A pilot parent

mentoring program was developed with the assistance of our spring Community Health intern, Abby Kiem. This new mentoring program fits well into our overall mentoring programs: new resident, alumni, and high school.

Our residents were exposed to new opportunities this year – researched the possibilities – took some risks – and had some personal new beginnings of their own either at the university level or nationally. One example is Melissa Sage, our Odelius Award winner, who volunteers at the Crisis Nursery, University Primary School, and Provena Hospital.

Five of our current Beckwith supported residents will have new beginnings next fall. Jade Urcina and Jessica Lukefahr graduated in May. Nicole Emrikson transitioned to Newman Hall. Brian O'Donnell and Peter Floess will move to accessible rooms on the second floor of Nugent Hall managing their disability needs/staff without the support of Beckwith staff and programs – very exciting.

So, as we end this year and plan for the beginning of the upcoming academic year, we are excited! We will open our doors in August 2011 with all 22 rooms occupied, with nine being first-year residents. As I write this article, there are two students accepted to Illinois who want to receive Beckwith services, but we have no room for them. The good news is that we will increase the number of rooms to 26 in Fall 2012. Remarkably, we have had three high school students visit us this year who would be part of the Fall 2012 freshman class.

While some highlights from the year are in this newsletter, it doesn't include all the small beginnings that residents experienced such as independent Amtrak train travel, being an executive officer for Nugent Hall Council, ice skating with friends, having seven food stations to choose from in the dining hall, using the CU Mass Transit system, and developing new friendships within a larger university living environment.

As Seneca said, "Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." While this quote from a Roman philosopher from the mid-1st century is true, what I have learned from this year is – it is what one does between the beginning and the beginning's end that is most important.



The Legacy Continues

By Brad Hedrick, Ph.D., Director of DRES

Nugent Hall represents the University's most recent stop on a journey that began in 1959, when it embraced the challenge of accommodating the residential needs of its first student with a disability who required personal assistants (PAs) to perform activities of daily living. At that time, the solution required a partnership with a Champaign nursing home. However, by 1962, a private home located on campus was secured and remodeled to accommodate both residents with disabilities and their PA personnel. Then, in 1982, through the generosity of the Guy M. Beckwith family, Beckwith Hall was built, and a whole new level of transitional residential and educational support services was introduced. Now, by integrating the programs and services of Beckwith Hall into the newly opened and technologically sophisticated confines of Nugent Hall, Illinois has taken yet another giant leap forward in advancing educational access and inclusion for students who require PAs. Over the decades, I have heard many testimonials of students and their family members regarding the life changing impact that the aforementioned programs and facilities had upon their lives both personally and professionally. Based upon the wonderful personal stories contained in this edition of *Beckwith News*, it is obvious that this legacy continues at Nugent Hall.

I know that you will enjoy the stories of empowerment, growth, and accomplishment by the students with disabilities, family members, PA personnel and Beckwith and Nugent Program staff during our inaugural year at Nugent Hall, and I am equally certain that as you read, you will sense the tremendous excitement that we share about the future of this extraordinary program!

The Best Decision of My Life

By Melissa Sage
2011 Matthew A. Odelius Award Recipient



In August, 2009, I transferred to Illinois from Carl Sandburg College where I received an A.A. degree and was a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society. This was my first time living away from my family in 23 years, and I was really nervous. I came to Illinois for the comprehensive support system that is provided for individuals with disabilities through Beckwith, and the opportunity to receive my B.S. degree from a top notch institution. Now, I am pursuing a degree in Community Health with a concentration in Rehabilitation and Disability Studies. My ultimate goal is to someday become a child life specialist. I realize that none of my current goals would be becoming a reality for me today if I had not been a Beckwith resident.

I now understand that this was one of the best decisions I have made so far for a few reasons. First, living at Beckwith and utilizing the transitional disability management program (TDMP) has given me the confidence and the ability to become more and more independent and be involved in university life as much as I am. My ultimate goal in living at Beckwith was to gain skills where I would feel ready to live in a regular residence hall. Well, this summer I did just that! I stayed on campus, living in another residence hall, taking a class and continuing with my various volunteer interests. It was such a great experience, only because of a lot of pre-planning through

“I realize that none of my current goals would be becoming a reality for me today if I had not been a Beckwith resident.”

my TDMP. Second, I currently volunteer at Crisis Nursery, University Primary School, and Provena Hospital. I love working with children which is why I chose the career path that I did, and I really am looking forward to pursuing my graduate studies after Illinois. I actually learned about the University Primary School through Paige. They wanted to visit Beckwith as part of a unit on machines. She knew that I wanted to work with children, and thought it would be a great opportunity for me, so she gave me the teacher’s contact information and the rest is history. I sat in during their visit and told them about the various assistive technology and adapted aides that I use daily to be more

independent. What I love is that wherever I volunteer, the children are so innocent and don’t hesitate to ask questions or crawl up on my lap. I’m inadvertently educating them on the abilities that I have to offer despite having a disability.

Finally, I never thought of myself as possessing leadership traits, but what I realize is that all of the experiences that I’ve had since arriving at Illinois have been developing that skill in me. I’m more outspoken, and confident. I jump at opportunities to be involved in organizing activities, and most importantly, I’m going to be one of the mentors next year for first year Beckwith supported residents. I will help them to transition to Illinois and Beckwith, and hopefully they’ll realize that they made the best decision of their lives also in choosing to attend school here and receive support from the Beckwith program.

I am also extremely honored to have been chosen to receive this year’s Matthew A. Odelius Award which celebrates the accomplishments of a former Beckwith resident. This award is presented annually to a student with a physical disability residing at Beckwith that has demonstrated leadership in student organizations while balancing academics and other commitments. Academically, I made the Dean’s List this past semester along with becoming a member of the National Honor Society. I attribute my academic success and active community involvement to the Beckwith Program and its outstanding support system. I cherish that these are the same traits that Matthew embraced when he was a student living at Beckwith.



Taking Risks

By John Douglas Burton
Third-Year Resident

Well, the past school year has been interesting, to say the least. We made some memories, recruited a few rookies to the Beckwith game and even got a new clubhouse to call our own. While it has periodically come to question whether Nugent Hall is an upgrade or downgrade from Beckwith Hall (and I think we've fairly concluded that it's simply different), I think a better question is "how much have each of us grown as individuals?"

It's been an honor to have been part of Beckwith and Nugent these past three years. Comparing my life now to what it was pre-college, it would suffice to say that it is certainly denser. Dense in a sense that during my high school years, something noteworthy would happen in my life maybe a couple times a month. A sleepover at a friend's house, a school dance, a spell bowl competition... just a couple of the absolute highlights of my mid-teenage years. I knew nothing about people or résumés or being an adult. Most of those things had never even crossed my mind. Everything changed in the blink of an eye. Beckwith Hall was a place where I was free to be my own person. Looking back, I spent countless nights playing Super Smash Brothers in the lounge, eating pizza in the cafeteria, laboring through long papers and lab reports that resulted in all-nighters, and the occasional party or two. Life suddenly became something challenging, exciting, and significant all at once. I reminisce with friends who were and weren't there all the time (although there is nothing quite like experiencing it yourself). And that, was just freshman year.

This year, I was asked to appear before the University of Illinois Board of Trustees over spring break. Last semester, I was asked to represent the students as Nugent Hall and Ikenberry Commons were officially dedicated homecoming weekend. I felt humbled, then nauseous at both events! The way people spoke of it, I felt as though this could be the point where my underclassman years started to build to something big. To be asked to speak at both of these events never entered into my wildest dreams. In the end though, I guess I just decided to go for the sheer joie de vivre (joy of life), not to impress anyone or gain connections. I just threw caution to the wind and dove into it headfirst. As I look back, I realize how really awesome it was and how glad I was that people seemed really interested in what I had to say. I am still very honored to have been given the opportunity.

If college has taught me anything, it is that when you take risks it almost always has positive repercussions, even if they are to just learn from your failure. I treated the speeches like any homework assignment I had while at Beckwith, by simply doing the best I could. Truly, the story of my life has been almost entirely condensed into these past three years.

But here is the challenge I pose to our freshmen and transfer students: instead of passing down the Beckwith torch to next year's class (which I hear is immense), share the stories you've made so far in your own personal journeys. Take pride in them. This is your program and this is your school, so make the most of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and live it up a little, because you won't be here forever.



John Burton addresses the University of Illinois Board of Trustees during their March meeting in Springfield.

Rules for the “Game of College”

By Victoria Raymond, First-Year Resident



When I was six years old, I wanted to be an actress. I had a life plan to be famous like Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen (hot tropical locales and cute boys included.) My life plan included how the movie studios would cope with my lack of ability to balance. I thought “If they can make Arnold Schwarzenegger look like he’s made out of steel, then my legs shouldn’t be a problem.”

Fast-forward to my junior year in high school, the six-year-old who believed in that extent of movie magic now knew that it was all special effects. Then on my mother’s insistence we went to look at Illinois and learned all about Beckwith. For the first time, I saw people with disabilities out en masse being regular college kids. Being the cautious kid who pretty much like all teenagers, hates to admit her mother might have common sense was skeptical at first. It took a few more visits and many discussions over the dinner table and then I decided on Illinois.

How the rules came to be: I was really anxious throughout the fall semester, so these revelations made it all make sense to me in the end:

Rule #1: First thing I learned was baby steps. Take it day by day and sometimes hour by hour, depending on the day.

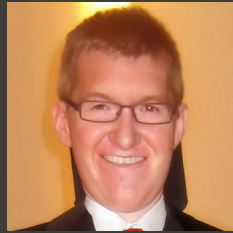
Rule #2: Plan as much as you can. Yes you can be a regular college kid, but it takes some planning and organizing.

Rule #3: Give people time... yourself included. Give new friends time to meet you, but keep old ones close too. New personal assistants (PAs) need time to learn new skills, just like you need time to figure out how to explain how they can best help you.

Rule #4: Give yourself extra time... for everything. Plan for extra time getting to class on the first day as you get familiar with a new campus. It takes time to forge strong friendships. Find your niche and start to carve out your life.

Rule #5: Beckwith can give you the tools to succeed in this huge transition. I again was skeptical at first, but when I embraced what they were trying to teach me I was amazed. I became confident to get around campus on my own, try out for a part in a Shakespearean play, join a club, manage my PAs, and deal with the durable medical equipment company when my scooter had problems, not to mention getting used to the different academic routine with being “a regular college kid.” Oh yeah, did I also mention that I really wanted to challenge myself? So with a lot of discussion with my family and the Beckwith staff I focused on transitioning to another residence hall without the additional support that I was currently receiving for the spring semester.

How to win the game: Follow Rules #1- #5, because they work! I know not everybody is ready to move after one semester, but set a goal and work toward achieving it. As I look back at when I first arrived on campus to now; I’m amazed at all I’ve accomplished and how much I’ve changed. I’m happy and though everything isn’t always perfect, I’m able to deal with it and be satisfied with whatever happens. I’m glad that I lived at Beckwith, even though it was brief, and I won’t hesitate to go visit my friends there or take advantage of a program that they are holding.



Who Says Barriers are Unbreakable?

by Kevin Fritz, Class of 2010

After leaving behind the cornfields and orange love of Illinois, I decided to head to a city known for big arches and crime. St. Louis, home to the Gateway Arch, the Cardinals, unusually high crime rates, and beer is very different from what I'm used to. But it is actually a great city with tons to do, and I am glad to be at Washington University getting my law degree. I live in a sweet apartment right near one of the largest parks in the country and spend up to 18 hours a day reading about crimes, contracts, tortes, and divorce (though some would say these topics are one in the same).

Law school is nothing like working on my undergrad. Some people are older, others younger; some are doctors, mothers, and one is a real life prince! But school is 100% business. There are activities and surprisingly lawyers who know how to party, but when I am in class it is time for serious learning. Like one day in front of my class of 170: "Mr. Fritz, tell me the relevant facts of *McCarthy v. Kelly*" – (I scan my notes for something relevant and respond) – "Okay, Mr. Fritz, now switch out the plaintiff with one from the case we read yesterday, add a 12(b)(6) motion, apply the federal statute, and tell the class how you would draft your pleading" – (AHHH!). You have to be on point!

I am lucky that after my long days I get to go home to my staff. I was able to hire attendants through some various outlets and am happy to report it has been a success. I receive the same kind of great care I got from Beckwith and while it isn't always perfect, it is so rewarding to know I found people all on my own. It gives me a sense of confidence that has empowered me to live anywhere I like. In fact, this summer I will return once again to Washington, DC, as an Employment and Disability Policy Associate with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. I am excited and honored to keep working for the betterment of people experiencing hardships in life and in their workplace. I have also been involved with research and public service. Schoolwork keeps me quite busy, but I really enjoy applying some of my classroom skills to real-life situations.



Kevin at the U.S. Supreme Court Building in Washington, DC.

I've said it before, but lately it could not be more true. The barriers to entry in many situations are great, but they are not unbreakable. At Washington University's School of Law, I'm the only wheelchair user. Leaving Illinois, I once again remember what my life was like before attending a University where a "pioneer" a long time ago risked everything to ensure people with disabilities could be educated and included in every aspect of college life. I once again have to fight for everything. I say this because most of you too will soon leave the "comforts" of Illinois. It will be a challenge no doubt, but if Paige, Pat, and Katherine are still as amazing and helpful as they were when I was there, I am confident you too will have the skills. Anybody can live their dreams and make their mark in the world. GO ILLINI!

The Importance of Family: *A Mother and Daughter Share Thoughts on Beckwith*

By Kelsey and Mary Rozema

The Greatest Comfort of All

by Kelsey Rozema

It's very ironic that my life revolves around music, and yet I cannot write three hundred words based around a Semisonic lyric from the song *Closing Time*. Although the quote: "Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end" wasn't theirs originally, it actually dates back hundreds of years. Still, when I read this, that simply haunting melody will always play in my head, reminding me of my old family.

I had a good high school experience. Honestly, I was far from an outcast. I was by no means popular, but I had a group of good friends I could rely on, and I had choir. It sounds cheesy to anyone who didn't go through the Lincoln-Way Central Choir Program, but those other students became my family. We were dysfunctional, always yelling at each other, and creating new dramas that can rival those seen on *Glee*, but we were a family none the less. I can truly say that we loved each other, and when I was around them I felt safe and protected.

One of my biggest fears about going on to college was leaving this family. Then I came to Beckwith/Nugent. It took all of two weeks for me to realize that I had become part of a new family. We are dysfunctional, always yelling at each other, and creating new dramas that can rival those seen on *Glee*, and I love every minute of it. Sure, the group dynamic here is a lot different. We only burst out singing one time, and that was in unison to *Journey*. But, the new family that I've found here still offers the same support and understanding that I had thought I left behind.

I wish I could tell you how they had helped me out through a wreck of a freshman year, where PAs didn't show and I got lost for hours on end, but they never needed to. I had a great year, with surprisingly few problems. This is probably because the administration here did such a great job trying to make my transition as easy as possible. I was extremely lucky. But I know that if I wasn't so lucky, the people here—friends, PAs, administration, random strangers on the street—would help me. This is the greatest comfort of all. I'm truly happy here.



Kelsey and friends enjoying "Beckwith on Ice" at the University Ice Arena.

"The new family that I've found here offers the same support and understanding that I had thought I left behind."

In Her Element

by Mary Rozema

I really cannot believe freshman year is over! It went by so fast!

Glitches... I thought there would be more glitches. I was actually prepared for at least a few of them. But there weren't any... at least on my end. No driving down to campus at the last minute to save the day; as I was prepared to do.

I don't know if it was because Kelsey was determined that I would NOT do just that, or if it was because the support system for Nugent residents is really that good. I tend to think that it was a combination of the two!

I can say I am truly impressed with the independence and confidence my daughter has gained with her first year of college life. I tell people when they ask about her that she is doing great, she absolutely loves school and she is in her element.

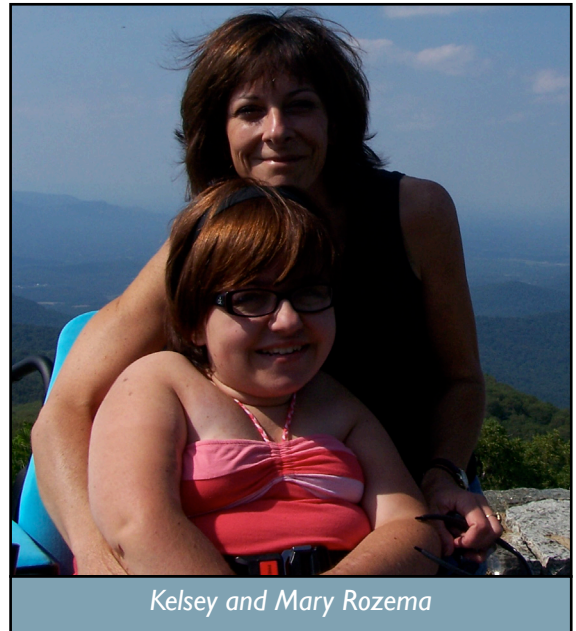
I believe she is in her element due, in a large part, to the fabulous support services available to her and the accessibility of her environment. Her dorm room and bathroom have worked out excellently for her needs. She is actually able to be more independent at school than at home, especially with transferring in and out of bed and getting dressed.

Her aides have been invaluable to her and all have been well trained and of great character. They have been dependable and caring and she has made wonderful friends among them. She loves the good natured kidding and joking and positive atmosphere they can provide also.

The people at DRES were a constant source of support and aide for Kelsey, so kudos to them. Pat, Paige, and Katherine have all done an excellent job with the start up and running of the Beckwith program in Nugent Hall so kudos also. I know that when things run so smoothly it is because there is a lot of hard work and dedication put in behind the scenes that make it that way!

I can see that Kelsey is having an experience of a lifetime now. She will take this with her for the rest of her life. Kelsey's father and I wish to sincerely thank everyone involved with making this opportunity such a positive one for all of us.

Although... I was not able to use my Supermom cape once... maybe I'll save it for Halloween.



Kelsey and Mary Rozema

A Leap of Faith

By Alicia Santerelli
Disability Advocate



On the brink of a year of firsts and new beginnings, I could relate. Having attended the University of Illinois for my undergrad and working as a personal assistant last year at Beckwith, I was used to Champaign and the life I had made here. At the same time, knowing I was graduating in May left me apprehensive about starting the next chapter. Driving up to Nugent Hall in the beginning of August, I was unfamiliar with the new building and this area of campus, and a little nervous about the job I was about to jump into headfirst.

Flash back a few months – I saw a sign in the Beckwith cafeteria for an opening as a disability advocate for the upcoming school year in the new building, Nugent Hall. I was unsure of my plans for the coming year, as I was planning to take a year off before applying to graduate school. However, my parents have always told me, “When a door opens, walk through it.” From that day on, I never looked back. After interviewing and accepting the position, it dawned on me just how much this program had affected me. The fact that this job and these people influenced me enough to cause me to pursue a different master’s program and path in life speaks volumes to how amazing this community truly is.



Alicia and Brian, on the receiving end of a pie-throwing event during the annual Housing fundraiser for St. Baldrick’s Foundation.

Beckwith has shown me that people are capable of things they may not have dreamed possible when given support and told they can do it. When someone not only believes in you but builds you up, laughs with you, and relates to you, friendships are formed that will stay with you for life. The kind of supports this program provides and the type of people it attracts, both staff and residents, is extremely unique. People here inspire each other to take chances and move forward no matter what. The transition to Nugent Hall brought many surprises, unknowns, and bumps in the road; but when faced with optimism, a sense of humor, and a group of people not afraid to take on challenges and persevere, this new beginning is truly the start of many memorable years to come.

Being a part of this community for the past year, I know I’ve learned a ton about myself and changed for the better. I’ve learned that taking a leap of faith, though scary, can lead to unforgettable experiences. I’ve learned that being part of a great team makes going to work fun, and relying on others and asking for help is a good thing. Finally, I’ve learned how quickly strangers can become friends and a new building can become home. I couldn’t be more excited to come back next year and continue to discover what the future holds!

“Beckwith has shown me that people are capable of things they may not have dreamed possible when given support and told they can do it.”



A Lasting Impression

by Brian K. Willis, Jr.
Disability Advocate

This past year has been a wonderful one for me. It seems just yesterday I was checking in my first student in Beckwith for the fall semester, and very soon, I will be checking out the last student for summer break. When I was blessed to become a disability advocate (DA), I was somewhat hesitant to accept the offer, since I did not have any experience working, interacting, or supervising students with disabilities. I recognize how far I've come this year. As a social work graduate student I'm taught to appreciate everyone's differences, and personally I feel up until this point in my life, I was not given the opportunity to do so with persons with disabilities. I went from shunning away from the issue of disabilities to embracing, empowering and educating not only myself, but also others on people's disabilities and disability concerns. I was able to do this through my experience with Beckwith.

As a DA there have been some great days and also some challenging ones. Throughout the year, we had exciting events such as our Disability Awareness forum, Beckwith on Ice, and Beckwith Beauty (where I performed manicures for the female residents). In addition, we encountered challenging events such as clogged toilets, busted lips, and long nights on duty. I have learned that to enjoy Beckwith you have to be prepared for the unknown, and embrace your challenges and successes as they come. My year at Beckwith has taught me a lot that I will be able to apply in different areas of my life.

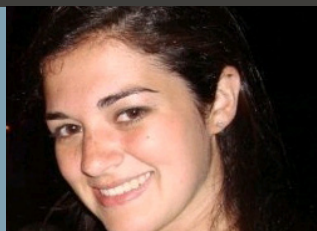


Everyone had a great time at the annual Beckwith holiday party.

The original Beckwith Hall opened in 1982 to accommodate the residential needs of students with disabilities who required the help of personal assistants to perform basic activities of daily living. Throughout that time, many memories were made. In the year 2010, I was introduced to the "new" Beckwith, now referred to as Beckwith Residential Support Services, which is housed in Nugent Residence Hall. This new building signifies the new beginning of the program. I am happy to say I was part of the first Beckwith cohort to experience this new building. Nugent Hall can never replace Beckwith Hall, but it can emulate its goal toward creating new beginnings for students from now on. It can afford them the opportunity to experience state-of-the-art technology as Beckwith did over 25 years ago. As the quote says "Every new beginning comes from some other beginning's end." I was able to enjoy the new beginnings of Beckwith and as my new beginning is ending, it opens a door for the next DA to start their new beginning. I hope that Beckwith has enjoyed me as much as I have enjoyed it. In addition, I hope I was able to make an impact on the residents and staff of Beckwith, because they have made a lasting impression on my life professionally and personally. I wish the Beckwith program continued success as the program continues to strive.

An Internship Like No Other

By Abby Kiem
Community Health Intern



Senior internships mean a lot of different things to students. For many, they are nothing more than required hours for graduation that you can put on a résumé, and be done with. I can honestly say that I am not one of those people. My internship with Beckwith has been enlightening, educational, and most of all, fun. I have been able to meet and work with people that I wish I would have met years ago. I have gotten experiences that couldn't necessarily be put on a résumé or explained in an interview, but that have been monumental in my life. I know I will cherish this internship opportunity for years to come.

I can't emphasize how much I have enjoyed my time here at Nugent. Whether working with Paige, Pat, and Katherine, or socializing with residents, I have loved every minute. While I have learned a lot about disabilities and related fields through my internship assignments, I know that my experiences with all the great people here are what will really stick with me: laughing hysterically with Hugo, strange conversations with Ben, cooking with Kelsey and the other residents, getting beaten in video games by John, Kushal, and Ian, gossiping with Steph, and all the other fun interactions I've had here. Basically, while my classmates were filing papers and making photocopies in their internships, I was making friends and having an amazing time in mine. These are the memories of my senior year that I will keep forever.

This semester has flown by, and I can't believe that it's coming to an end. Although the school year has come to a close, I don't feel as though this is the end of anything. Even though I graduated in the spring, I believe that friendships and communication will continue into the future. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to have learned so much and to have met so many amazing people. I know that I will always remember and treasure being fortunate to be a part of the Beckwith community.



Hugo Trevino, Steph Zaia, and Kelsey Rozema making bruschetta in Abby's cooking group.



A Place Called Home

By Steve Odon
Personal Assistant

Entering the 2010-11 year was very exciting for me and all of those involved with Beckwith. As I arrived for my first floater shift, my mind turned upside down; it was so different. You see, I began working at Beckwith last year on East John Street. I heard about Nugent Hall and how cool it was, but I really didn't know what to expect. Change does not come easy to people like me, but you have to use the cards you are dealt. Eventually, it isn't so foreign and what I appreciated about being a part of Beckwith stood out.

Despite some early complaints about the building and drastic adjustments made to move from one building to the other, the Beckwith family turned an unfamiliar building into a place called home. Something wonderful is in the making. I say that because we are the foundation of Nugent Hall's future success. Every action we hold within and outside these walls will affect those students in the future.

With the end of winter and the beginning of spring, a few themes became a little more prevalent in my mind. Winter is tough for all of those at Illinois. It is cold, there is no sunlight and we rarely have a day off to decompress. In spring, we all somehow find a way to find time for ourselves and time to heal any wounds from winter. In spring, we can begin to feel the increasing positive energy from each other that comes with warm weather. In spring, we feel confidence in ourselves growing as our aspirations begin to build. Healing, feeling and believing- that's what I think spring is all about. So I say to everyone, let go today. Take a breath and be brave. You are not ending a part of your life; you are opening up to the rest of it.



Brian O'Donnell studying in his room.

“Something wonderful is in the making. I say that because we are the foundation of Nugent Hall's future success.”

Notes to Self

By Gina Dentzman
Nugent Resident Advisor



If you told me three years ago I would be living in the residence halls all four years of college, I would have said you were crazy. But here I am, heading for year four in Ikenberry Commons, more specifically Nugent Hall; and I am as happy as an obnoxiously enthusiastic resident advisor (RA) [oh wait, I am an obnoxiously enthusiastic RA]. Like every beginning, my new life as an RA brought anxiety and anticipation. What will it be like? Who will I meet? Will my residents like and respect me?

Note to self: Every beginning instigates some fear and anxiety.

So, I started off as an RA in Garner and quickly realized how lucky I was to have this job. I loved getting to know my residents, checking in with them, and planning programs. I lived in a hallway with all boys, who kept my life interesting, and I headed over to the girls' side when I needed estrogen in my life.

Note to self: Every beginning is quickly and suddenly not a beginning anymore.



Molly Johnson, Beckwith floater, assists Melissa Sage with the SureHands ceiling lift system.

After a fun and sometimes challenging year as an RA, CJ Holterman, the Garner Resident Director (RD) offered me the position in the fancy-schmancy “new building.” I headed over to meet the Beckwith folks, and I felt like I was starting all over again.

Note to self: Beginnings are always beginning.

Spring turned to summer and summer to fall, and we all moved into Nugent together, sharing hopes, worries, and reservations about the new space.

Note to self: Some people give decent first impressions. Beckwith residents catch your heart from the beginning.

Before I could blink my eyes, this beginning began another beginning (isn't this issue about beginnings?). I started working as a personal assistant, and the work gave me joy and purpose.

Note to self: The most important beginning is the one that changes you for the better.

Despite the nerves and the reservations, Beckwith is fully integrated into University Housing – and I can't explain how happy I am that this is true. So with one full

school year under our belts in Nugent Hall (the building upperclassmen gawk at and freshmen envy), I reflect on the smoothest of transitions from Beckwith to Ikenberry. Beckwith continues to foster self-determination and personal empowerment. And by the looks of things, there is nothing that will ever slow it down.



Exciting Times: Part Deux

by CJ Holterman
Garner/Nugent Resident Director

Hello again, your friendly neighborhood resident director here. First, let me fill you in on what has happened since my article last year. We successfully welcomed the Beckwith Program as they transitioned from their home on John Street to our new home in Nugent Hall. The transition went well overall with only a few bumps along the way. All of the planning that we did before the move definitely paid off. Over the first few days of opening Nugent Hall I gained a new found respect for those that I collaborate with, the Beckwith staff, workers in facilities and our students. The fact that I could depend on those around me to help solve any problems that arose helped me to create solutions that were quickly implemented.

Beginning as early as the first day that the students arrived, I have seen our community grow. I am delighted to report that our residents are greatly involved in the greater Nugent community, from making connections with students on other floors or leading Nugent Hall Council. The residents also utilize various spaces in the Student Dining and Residential Programs (SDRP) building next door such as the Cardio Room, the Learning Commons, the Caffeinator, 57 North, and the music practice rooms. The student involvement in both the hall and the housing community has exceeded my expectations. Nugent Hall Council hosted a semiformal dance at the end of April, in which they collaborated with the other eight residence halls in the Ikenberry Commons. It was a wonderful event.

So what is next? The Beckwith Program will be full and so we will have more students able to add to the dynamics and development of our community. This will breathe new life into both the first floor and the building as a whole. I am looking forward to opening the hall again with a greater understanding of what to expect and planning for another great year.



Residents enjoying the evening at the Nugent Hall Council Semiformal Dance.

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